

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 13357

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN PFOR PLO XF

SUBJECT: PLO SECURITY: VISAS FOR ADVANCE PARTY

REF: STATE 246410

1. EMBOFFS RELAYED MESSAGE CONTAINED REFTEL TO LOCAL PLO OFFICE DIRECTOR CHAFIC AL HOUT MORNING NOV 8. (HOUT AND HIS DEPUTY, ABDUL KADER DAHER, CALLED AT EMBASSY VOLUNTARILY IN HOPE OF HELPING TO CLARIFY WHAT HAS BECOME--FOR US, AT LEAST--A MOST CONFUSED AND POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING SITUATION.) FOLLOWING POINTS EMERGED FROM OUR DISCUSSIONS:

(A) PLO OFFICIALS HERE LABORING UNDER IMPRESSION THAT ALL ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, FOR VISIT OF 'ARAFAT AND HIS PARTY ARE BEING WORKED OUT WITH UN AND USG THROUGH GOE AND EMBASSY CAIRO. THEY INFORMED US THAT 'ARAFAT'S TOP SECURITY AIDE, ALI HASSAN SALAMEH (ABU HASSAN), IS TRAVELING TO CAIRO FROM BEIRUT THIS EVENING IN ORDER SUPERVISE THESE ARRANGEMENTS, AND THAT SALAMEH PRESUMABLY WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SENDING ADVANCE SECURITY PARTY TO NEW YORK TO FINALIZE SUCH ARRANGEMENTS PRIOR TO 'ARAFAT'S ARRIVAL.

(B) HOUT CONSIDERS THAT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR BOTH PLO OFFICIAL AND INFORMATION DELS ARE QUESTIONS ENTIRELY SEPARATE FROM ARRANGEMENTS BEING MADE FOR 'ARAFAT AND
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HIS PARTY, AND HE HOPES THEY CAN BE KEPT THAT WAY. HE STATED THAT

NEW YORK PLO REP, SAADAT HASSAN, HAS BEEN TRYING TO WORK WITH US OFFICIALS ON THIS BASIS, AND HE EXPRESSED FERVENT WISH THAT ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO PLO OFFICIAL AND INFORMATION DELS NOT RPT NOT BE DELAYED PENDING FINALIZATION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR 'ARAFAT AND HIS PARTY.

(C) HOUT CLAIMED HASSAN'S EFFORTS TO WORK OUT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR OFFICIAL AND INFORMATION DELS HAVE BEEN COMPLICATED BY USG INSISTENCE THAT THOSE DELS BE QUARTED AT SOME "MILITARY" OR OTHER INSTALLATION IN NEW YORK, AND BY HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT SUCH ACCOMMODATIONS FOR FEAR THEY WOULD EFFECTIVELY "SEAL OFF" PLO OFFICIALS--ESPECIALLY MEMBERS OF INFORMATION DEL (WHICH WE NOW UNDERSTAND HAS BEEN REDUCED TO 17 RPT 17 PERSONS)--FROM VIRTUALLY ALL CONTACT WITH AMERICAN MEDIA REPS, FOREIGN NEWSMEN ACCREDITED TO UN, AND EVEN MEMBERS OF OTHER UN DELS. IN HOUT'S VIEW, SUCH ARRANGEMENTS WOULD "DEFEAT THE PURPOSE" OF SENDING PLO INFORMATION DEL TO NEW YORK IN FIRST PLACE.

(D) HOUT EMPHASIZED THAT SAADAT HASSAN HAS AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT ANY RPT ANY ACCOMMODATIONS AND OTHER SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS PROPOSED BY USG FOR PLO OFFICIAL AND INFORMATION DELS, SO LONG AS SUCH ARRANGEMENTS DO NOT RPT NOT OVERLY RESTRICT ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT NOTED ABOVE. HE REALIZES, OF COURSE, THAT CERTAIN SECURITY PRECAUTIONS MUST NECESSARILY RESTRICT FREEDOM OF BOTH PLO DELS TO MAKE CONTACTS AND MOVE ABOUT FREELY IN NEW YORK (AND IN FACT HE IS VERY APPRECIATIVE OF USG'S CONCERN FOR THEIR SAFETY). HE HOPES, HOWEVER, THAT SAADAT HASSAN AND US OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN WORKING OUT MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS CAN DO SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO AND WITHOUT REQUIRING DISPATCH OF A SEPARATE ADVANCE SECURITY TEAM (SEPARATE FROM ADVANCE SECURITY TEAM THAT MAY PRECEDE 'ARAFAT TO US) TO NEW YORK.

(E) HOUT POINTED OUT THAT IF PLO OFFICIAL AND INFORMATION DELS ARE TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR 'ARAFAT'S PARTY AT UPCOMING UNGA DEBATE, THEY MUST ARRIVE NEW YORK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, CERTAINLY NO LATER THAN MONDAY, NOV 11. HE FEELS THAT FURTHER DELAY INVOLVED IN SENDING SEPARATE SECURITY TEAM TO NEW YORK AT THIS LATE JUNCTURE WOULD CAUSE THIS DEADLINE TO BE MISSED, AND THAT MUTUAL RECRIMINATIONS RESULTING FROM THIS SITUATION WOULD

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HAVE ADVERSE POLITICAL IMPACT WHICH ALL PARTIES CONCERNED SINCERELY WISH TO AVOID.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: WE SHARE HOUT'S HOPE THAT HASSAN AND US OFFICIALS WITH WHOM HE IS DEALING CAN AGREE ON MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS RE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PLO OFFICIAL AND INFORMATION DELS THAT WOULD MEET MINIMAL SECURITY REQUIREMENTS AND AT SAME TIME AFFORD BOTH DELS SOME DEGREE OF LATITUDE

IN THEIR CONTACTS AND MOVEMENTS IN NEW YORK. WE ASSUME THAT THIS WOULD ENABLE DEPT TO AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO PLO INFORMATION DEL (WE GATHER VISAS ARE ALREADY AUTHORIZED FOR ISSUANCE TO SOME MEMBERS OF NINE-MAN OFFICIAL DEL (SEE CAIRO 8922) AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY IN ORDER PERMIT THEM TO TRAVEL TO US IN TIME FOR EFFECTIVE COVERAGE OF UNGA DEBATE. (IN THIS CONNECTION, HOUT TELLS US THAT SAADAT HASSAN REPORTEDLY PRESSED HIS US CONTACTS ON NOV 7 FOR ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO PLO, INFORMATION DEL ON NOV 8 AND THAT US OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY GAVE HIM "POSITIVE" RESPONSE.)
GODLEY

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